THE "ANGELIC SHEPHERD" AND THE TROJAN HORSE OF THE LITURGICAL REVOLUTION

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We have before us an interesting study by Father Didier Bonneterre titled "***The Liturgical Movement — From Dom Guéranger to Annibale Bugnini, or the Trojan Horse in the City of God"***.

The title is evocative and highly appropriate: the Liturgical Movement — which spawned a liturgical monstrosity, the New Mass of Paul VI — was, in many respects, the Trojan Horse within the City of God.

In this work — which we recommend reading for its insightful, well-documented, and engaging nature — we will focus specifically on the role played by Pope Pius XII regarding the liturgical revolution initiated by Fr. Lambert Beauduin and brought to completion by Paul VI through Msgr. Annibale Bugnini.

The first significant reference to this aspect of the issue appears on page 56 of the book:

"*This intervention* [by the Holy See] — *so dreaded* [by the liturgists]—*did, in fact, take place. It occurred during the era of the encyclicals* "Mediator Dei*" and "*Mystici Corporis*"* [by Pius XII]*. Pius XII's energetic 'braking' would certainly have saved the situation had the Secretariat of State not, at the same time, encouraged the German* [Liturgical] *Movement by granting it special privileges.*"

Indeed, in April 1943, Cardinal Bertram sent a memorandum to the Holy Father on behalf of all the other German bishops. This memorandum was a wholehearted, sweeping defense of the "Liturgical Movement" (...) The Cardinal took the opportunity to propose several reforms: the relaxation of the Eucharistic fast discipline [in force during World War II] beyond the wartime period, a new Latin translation of the Psalter, an enrichment of the Ritual through the inclusion of passages from Holy Scripture, and the shifting of the Holy Thursday and Good Friday ceremonies to the evening".

Father Bonneterre demonstrates — as we shall see —t hat Pius XII ultimately approved all these measures.

Cardinal Maglione, Pius XII's Secretary of State, replied on December 24, 1943:

"*In his reply, writes F. Kolbe, critical observations were certainly not lacking; however, the decision regarding the manner of celebrating the missa communitaria and the missa communitaria with hymns was left to the discretion of the bishops, and the German missa sung expressly permitted. This letter ensured the further development of the celebration of the Mass along the lines of the 'Liturgical Movement,' under the protection of the Bishops*."

Father Bonneterre continues:

"*The damage was done, and there would no longer be any way to control it. Pius XII would strive in vain to add all the desired doctrinal clarifications; the revolution would continue to gain ground. Did the Secretariat of State knew know, perhaps, that the bishops of the German Liturgical Commission — entrusted with responsibility for the forms of the celebration of the Mass — were among the most progressive figures of the "Movement ? Was Pius XI aware of Cardinal Maglione's maneuvers? There are so many questions that cannot be answered. What is certain, however, is that we are witnessing here one of the very first victories of the wayward "Liturgical Movement" over Roman Authority* (B.57).

Let us note that, according to Father Bonneterre, "*it is impossible to answer*" whether or not Pius XI was aware "*of Cardinal Maglione's maneuvers.*"

Father Bonneterre cites the opinion of Fr. Lambert Beauduin regarding the Holy See's performance during the time of Pius XII:

"*If the Holy See,*" he wrote, "is *rightly concerned with the full observance of liturgical norms and very strict regarding any action or initiative contrary to its laws, it shows itself, on the other hand, to be very understanding and welcoming toward all efforts made within the framework of current laws, and it unreservedly encourages historical studies investigating the origins and evolution of our rites. The Holy See therefore desires that its discipline be studied using all historical methods. The CPL* [Center for Liturgical Pastoral Care] *can thus fully carry out this aspect of its program*" . (B.62).

Dom Beauduin further observed that "*Rome fears, above all, scandalizing the faithful.*" Yet he added that "*the Church does not fear modifying its discipline for the good of its children*" (B.63).

In light of this "legalistic" stance taken by the Holy See, Dom Beaudouin recommended that his associates in the Liturgical Movement utilize the Bishops to present the CPL's wishes to Rome.

"*We need to be able to count on convinced and active support*" (B. 63). "*The CPL must undertake the task of making its work known to the consultants of the Sacred Congregation, the members of the Liturgical Academy, etc.*" (B. 64).

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Fr. Bonneterre analyzes what he termed the "braking" of the liturgical revolution initiated by Pius XII through the publication of the encyclical "*Mediator Dei"**.

"*We have already noted the Secretariat of State's setback regarding the demands of the German 'liturgical effort". Pius XII had been misled and was ill-informed. Nevertheless, his exceptional genius and great qualities as a Pastor led him to take vigorous initiatives in an attempt to curb 'the anti-liturgical heresy'." The Angelic Shepherd was impressed by Monsignor Gröber's pastoral letter. He would respond to the concerns of the Bishop of Freiburg im Breisgau with two encyclicals addressed to the universal Church:* "Mystici Corporis" *(June 29, 1943) and* "Mediator Dei" *(December 20, 1947)"*.

"*The encyclical "*Mediator Dei*", one of the longest ever published by the Pontifical Chancery, is undoubtedly one of Pope Pius XII's finest teachings. With extraordinary discernment and skill, the Pope preserves all that is good in the 'Liturgical Movement' while energetically condemning its deviations. We shall summarize this unique document, submitting ourselves in all respects to his judgment, while regretting, however, that it was not accompanied by concrete actions and precise sanctions against the liturgical revolutionaries.*" (B. 67)

Let us recall that Fr. Bonneterre stated that Pius XII—despite "his exceptional genius" and "great qualities as a Shepherd," and despite "his extraordinary discernment and skill"—"was betrayed and ill-informed."

Perhaps this explains why a document as beautiful as "Mediator Dei" was not followed by "concrete actions and precise sanctions against the liturgical revolutionaries" — something "regrettable," as Fr. Bonneterre put it.

A few pages later, Fr. Bonneterre reiterates his comments on "Mediator Dei":

"*This encyclical is admirable, and we recommend that all our readers read and meditate upon it. It is a true 'Liturgical Summa'. In any case, it stands as the Church's final recommendation to her children before entering that mysterious and immense night from which we have yet to see a way out. We have but one regret — as we mentioned earlier — which is that such a magnificent letter was not accompanied by concrete measures, including sanctions. Did the great Pius XII perhaps attribute intentions that were too pure — intentions reflecting his own holiness to the leaders of the "Liturgical Movement ?" Clearly, he did not see these men as the "brigands" they actually were. He believed he was dealing with intellectuals who had merely gone somewhat astray, when in fact — at least in the case of some — they*

were genuine revolutionary leaders. And how could it have been otherwise, when these leaders were introduced, supported, and encouraged by influential prelates? (B.70).

*"Saint Pius X had not contented himself with merely writing "*Pascendi*"; he had excommunicated Tyrrell and Loisy and had mandated the taking of the anti-modernist oath. We regret that Pius XII did not do the same in the face of the anti-liturgical heresy.* [We, too, regret it.] Y*et — let us repeat — could it have been otherwise when the Pope was being betrayed and ill-informed, and when many modernists had infiltrated key positions within the Church?"* (B., 71)

In the absence of concrete measures against the liturgical revolutionaries, Dom Beauduin could calmly continue his pernicious work.

Fr. Bonneterre confirms this by citing the testimony of Fr. Martimort:

"*The encyclical's warnings did not daunt Father Lambert Beauduin. With the extraordinary intensity of his gaze, he viewed the document within a universal Catholic perspective. Twelve years later, one must acknowledge that Father Lambert Beauduin had been right: the encyclical "Mediator Dei" set in motion an unprecedented liturgical resurgence throughout the world.*"

Thus, the major "braking" action by Pius XII was, in fact, an acceleration of the liturgical revolution. And this is what Fr. Bonneterre observes:

*"And indeed! This is the tragedy: "*Mediator Dei*" was used for liturgical subversion. Using a pontifical document for a purpose contrary to the Pope's intentions — there lies the mark of Satan. The Trojan Horse is indeed inside the City of God... Nothing will now halt the forward march of the misguided*

‘Liturgical Movement,’ and we can only lament the creation, on May 18, 1948, of a ‘Pontifical Commission for the Reform of the Liturgy’: not because such a reform, within proper limits, was impossible in itself, but because—within the context of the times, which the Pope could not have suspected—it meant handing oneself over, bound hand and foot, to the Adversary” . (B.71).

It is not entirely true that the Angelic Pastor failed to take concrete measures. He did take them. In favor of revolutionary reforms.

This is what we shall see from the words of Fr. Bonneterre himself:

The Liturgical Movement organized “International Meetings on Liturgical Studies.” In these, with the support of Cardinal Bea — Pius XII’s confessor — and other Prelates who were seemingly beyond all suspicion, bold reforms were proposed. Regarding the Assisi Congress of 1956, Fr. Bonneterre states:

“*Let us note, in passing, the address Pope Pius XII delivered on September 22, 1956, to the members of the Assisi Congress. It perfectly reflects the profound ambiguity of the Church’s situation at the end of the ‘Angelic Shepherd’s’ pontificate. We shall dwell at length on this matter in the next chapter; Pope Pius XII — and we have already emphasized this fact — was unaware of the true state of the ‘Liturgical Movement.’ Its most dangerous leaders were supported and protected by the highest dignitaries of the Church*. [Who were, in turn, angelically supported and protected by the Angelic Shepherd.] *How could the Pope have suspected that the ‘experts’ so highly praised by Cardinals Bea and Lercaro were, in reality, the Church’s most dangerous enemies? That is why Pius XII offered words of encouragement that were more than ill-advised to the Assisi congress participants*”.

"'*The Liturgical Movement' — the Pope told them — has emerged as a sign of God's providential designs for the present age, as a movement of the Holy Spirit within His Church to draw men closer to the mysteries of the faith and the riches of grace that flow from the active participation of the faithful in the liturgical life*'" (B., 86-87).

"*Such a statement would have been true and timely before 1920; by 1956, it was no longer so. In the interim, the 'Liturgical Movement' had disowned its origins and apostatized from the principles given to it by Dom Guéranger and Saint Pius X. It was no longer the breath of the Holy Spirit that animated it, but rather the fetid breath of Satan.*" (B., 87)

We noted that, according to Fr. Bonneterre's own account, Pius XII did indeed take concrete measures, but only in favor of the liturgical revolution. He recounted that the leaders of the Liturgical Movement had requested, as early as 1943, the following modifications:

1) the relaxation of the Eucharistic fast, even after the end of the war;

2) a new translation of the Psalter;

3) the insertion of passages from Sacred Scripture into the Ritual;

4) the transfer of the Holy Thursday and Good Friday ceremonies to the evening (Cf. B., 57).

Now...

"*By the "Motu Proprio"* 'In cotidianis precibus' *of March 24, 1945, Pius XII authorized the use of a new translation of the Psalms in the recitation of the Canonical Hours"* (B., 89).

"*By the Apostolic Constitution 'Christus Dominus' of January 6, 1953, Pope Pius XII reduced 'the time of fasting to be observed before Mass or Holy Communion—whether celebrated or received—to three hours for solid foods and one hour for non-alcoholic beverages*'" (B., 91).

Regarding this last measure, Fr. Bonneterre comments:

"*Thus, for the Pope, these were legitimate concessions to the demands of health and modern life, whereas for the neo-liturgists, these reforms constituted the first stages in the destruction of the Church's sacramental discipline... The duration would go from three hours to one hour, eventually reaching Paul VI's 'quarter-hou*r'" (B., 92).

"*By the Motu Proprio '*Sacram Communionem*' of March 19, 1957, the same Pontiff extended the permission to celebrate Mass in the afternoon*" (B., 91).

"*Here, once again, let us note that it was an essentially pastoral motive that prompted Pius XII to act: so that the faithful could attend the year's major liturgical ceremonies in large numbers.*

"To this end, since 1951 [Pius XII] *authorized certain dioceses to celebrate the Easter Vigil service on Holy Saturday night. In 1953* [he] *entrusted the Commission for the Reform of the Liturgy with the task of restoring the services for the entire Holy Week. Once the work was completed and approved by the body of Cardinals on July 19, 1955, it was promulgated by*

the Sacred Congregation of Rites via the decree ‘Maxima Redemptionis*’ on November 16 of that same yea*r (B., 93).

“...*the decree ‘Maxima Redemptionis’ justified only the change in time, without offering any explanation for the modifications to the ceremonies themselves. The Commission’s “*periti*” took advantage of the ongoing work to introduce their archaeological discoveries and liturgical concepts into the rites. These ‘experts’ used this reform as a testing ground; having confirmed the success achieved by their ceremonies, they extended them to the entire liturgy”* (B., 93).

“The rubrics of the Missal and the Breviary were not spared. ”As in previous cases, “*some local ordinaries addressed insistent requests to the Holy See.*”

“And Cardinal Cicognani continues:

“The Supreme Pontiff Pius XI, by virtue of his solicitude and pastoral office, referred the examination of this question to a special commission of experts, which was entrusted with the study of a general liturgical reorganization.”

“This work culminated in the promulgation, on March 23, 1955, of the decree “Cum hac nostra aetate” *by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. This reform aimed to simplify the rubrics, with the goal of making the recitation of the Breviary easier for priests. Pope Pius XII desired a simplification of the Breviary, and in this instance, too, the ‘experts’ steered the reform in the direction desired by the ‘Liturgical Movement’*. (B. 95).”

Father Bonneterre offers two reasons to explain why Pius XII made such disastrous concessions:

1- He was ill-informed and misled by his aides;

2- He was a saint:

"*Well then, let us say it again and again: Pope Pius XII did not realize the storm that was then shaking the Barque of Peter. Pius XI did not know that the 'Liturgical Movement' was in the hands of the Church's most formidable adversaries. How could he have suspected such a cruel reality when it was the greatest princes of the Church who were clothing these wolves in sheep's clothing? How could one grasp such a situation "AT THAT TIME, WITHOUT THE PERSPECTIVE OF HISTORY ?. It was impossible. It is easy to judge in 1980 — now that the modernists have long since cast off their masks and revealed their clandestine maneuvers to us — but in 1948, who could have known that beneath the cardinal's purple, beneath that white or black habit, there lurked a disciple of Loisy?* (B. 90)"

"*Pius XII therefore undertook, with the utmost purity of intention...* [Sic!]" *...the reforms demanded by the needs of souls, without realizing—and he "could not" have realized—that he was derailing the liturgy and discipline during one of the most critical periods of their history. And, above all, without imagining that he was putting into practice the agenda of the "Liturgical Movement" gone astray. The *desiderata* presented by Msgr. Harscouêt or Cardinal Bertram were drafted by Dom Beauduin and Romano Guardini... and Pius XII could not even have suspected it; such was the astonishing drama the Church experienced during this part of the pontificate of the Angelic Shepherd".* (B. 90-91).

"*We must, then, place ourselves on this dual plane to understand these initial Roman reforms: on the one hand, they are the expression of the will of a Pope who is a sain*t [Sic!]—*which guarantees his perfect orthodoxy; on the other hand, they are stages in the execution of a 'plot' hatched for the death of the Church"* (B., 91).

In all these reforms initiated by Pius XII, Fr. Bonneterre assures us, the Angelic Shepherd, in his holiness, sought the good of souls...

"*Pius XII considered that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages; we shall not presume to question his judgment, yet we simply remind our reader that, during this time, the misguided 'Liturgical Movement' was gaining ground"* (B.94).

Despite all these disastrous concessions by Pius XII, the liturgists wanted more. Consequently, they welcomed the Pope's death with joy. They hoped to elect a Pope from their own ranks.

"*News of the 'Angelic Pastor's' death was received with almost delirious joy within the circles of the misguided 'Liturgical Movement.' While it is true that Pius XII's reforms had offered some satisfaction to the Movement's leaders, the uncompromising orthodoxy he had maintained regarding them was not to their liking. New, bolder reforms were needed; a Pope was required who understood the issue of ecumenism and who would unreservedly champion the 'Movement.' Pius XII's passing finally offered grounds for hope"* (B.96).

Then came Pope Roncalli — John XXIII — and with him, new reforms. And with him, *"aggiornamento*". And with him, the Second Vatican Council. And after him, Pope Montini, who had served for many years as Pius XII's Undersecretary. The reforms initiated by Pius XII continued.

John XXIII expressly declared his intention to complete the reforms begun by Pius XII. Through the *motu proprio* "*Rubricarum Instructum*" of July 25, 1960, he established a commission to reform the rubrics of the Breviary and the Missal.

"*This liturgical reform* [carried out by John XXIII] *came into effect on January 1, 1961. Fundamentally, it is nothing other than the extension to the entire liturgy of the rubrics 'approved' in 1955 and 1956 by the 'experts' of the Reform Commission, and, as such, it merits the same judgment as the reforms of Pius XII*" . (B. 98).

"This 1960 reform thus constitutes, in a way, the synthesis of the pre-conciliar reforms. Despite painful losses and notable blunders, the Catholic liturgy remains substantially unchanged within it. John XXIII's great error was to entrust the restructuring of the liturgy's fundamental principles to the Council. From that moment on, the reforms would be entirely driven by a new conception of the liturgy. Admittedly, this conception was already 'emerging' in the pre-conciliar reforms, but it was contained — kept in check — by the vigilant orthodoxy of Pius XII" (B. 98-99).

The texts cited by Fr. Bonneterre demonstrate Pius XII's undeniable responsibility for the liturgical reform that led the Holy Church to the calamitous situation observed today.

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Notes:

1-"Editorial Iction", Buenos Aires, 1982. The original work, in French, dates from 1980.

2- “We cite the work using the abbreviation [B], placing our own comments in brackets. The texts in italics are by Fr. Bonneterre, who bears responsibility for the citations, judgments, and characterizations we reproduce.

3-Cf. Germany, *La Maison Dieu*, no. 74, 1963, “apud” b.57.

4- A.G. Martimort, ‘Notre père Dom Lambert Beauduin,’ in *Les questions liturgiques et paroissiales*, September 1959, *apud* B. 71, note 19.